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Kidnapped from his own office, which had been stormed by members of Bangladesh's Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) at 7 p.m. Dhaka time last night, anti-Jihadist Muslim journalist Salah Uddin Shoaib Choudhury was questioned for hours.

A para-military arm of the government, RAB is notorious for its crackdowns on dissidents and wholesale violations of human rights. People taken by RAB often disappear never to be seen again.

When RAB stormed the offices of Choudhury's newspaper, Weekly Blitz, they ordered his employees out and interrogated Choudhury, seizing his telephones and not allowing him any communication, friends or legal counsel.

"After more than an hour and a half on the scene, RAB claimed to find a controlled substance in Shoaib's desk—an allegation that Shoaib's friends and associates claim is impossible," his American friend Dr. Richard Benkin told Canada Free Press (CFP) last night. "His brother, Sohail claims that any evidence had to be planted."

"Shoaib was blindfolded and taken to an RAB interrogation center in Dhaka, where, according to Shoaib, his captors verbally abused him for hours, repeatedly calling him a "Zionist spy and agent of the Jews". They used expletives to refer to journalists against whom RAB has a record of harassing, and the United States Congress, which passed a resolution in Shoaib's support. The verbal assault, which included numerous threats, continued for another three hours until someone RAB described as a "high government official" telephoned and ordered them to release him. When Shoaib asked about the contrived drug charge, he was told they would not pursue it."

Last night's horror scene is a chilling reminder of how the Bangladeshi government is stepping up its harassment against the courageous journalist, who is due to return to court on trumped-up sedition charges on April 15.

Were it not for Benkin's intervention, Salah Uddin Shoaib Choudhury would likely have "disappeared" while held captive by RAB.

Upon receiving the news about his brother, Sohail contacted Dr. Benkin in Chicago. Sohail knew it was Dr. Benkin who had spearheaded Shoaib's release from prison in 2005 and that he has continued to block the Bangladeshi government's attempts to re-incarcerate him.

Time was of the essence, and Sohail called the US Embassy, where the matter was reported to the charge d'affairs. At the same time, Benkin contacted the office of Congressman Mark Kirk (R-IL), who has been Shoaib's long time champion in American Congress. Kirk's staff, specifically through Andria Hoffman, set up an emergency command center in his office, while Benkin went on to contact several other supportive members of Congress and Shoaib's international human rights attorney, Canadian MP Irwin Cotler. Benkin then called the Bangladeshi Embassy and demanded that Shoaib be released unharmed immediately or there would be consequences. Soon thereafter, the embassy received telephone calls from several Congressional offices, including Kirk's and those of Rep. Trent Franks (R-AZ), Rep. Allyson Schwartz (D-PA), and Rep. Steven Rothman (D-NJ).

Though Shoaib this time was released unharmed, last night's unexpected action represents a serious escalation of the government's long-standing harassment campaign against him.

"This courageous journalist now can now count supporters on every continent save Antarctica," said Benkin. "RAB does not carry out actions such as tonight's without serious consequences. The raid could have been in response to several failed attempts on the part of the government and radical Islamists to re-incarcerate Salah Uddin Shoaib Choudhury. And in my years of work on this case, I have learned that every government action is a probe of our resolve to continue the fight against injustice—a resolve several government officials told me we do not have."

Shoaib Choudhury was arrested and tortured by Bangladeshi authorities after exposing the rise of radical Islamists in that country, urging relations with Israel, and advocating genuine interfaith dialogue based on religious equality. He was released after seventeen months after an intense campaign by Benkin and Congressman Mark Kirk.

Last night proved that Shoaib Choudhury, who continues to publish Weekly Blitz despite government and other threats and even physical attacks, is an open target to his tormentors.